

## How to Use the IMLS Online Reviewer System

### STEM Expert Facilitation of Family Learning in Libraries and Museums (STEMeX)

#### Summary

- You will access the applications assigned to you by clicking on a link provided to you in an email message from your IMLS primary contact.
- You will enter your scores and comments through the IMLS Online Reviewer System.
- STEMeX review uses a 7-point scale for each of three sections of the application narrative: Statement of Need, Impact, and Project Design.
- Scores are in whole numbers only. Fractions, ranges, decimals, and zeroes are not allowed.
- You must write a constructive and substantive comment of between 30 and 2000 characters in length for each section of the application narrative.
- All three sections of the narrative have equal weight and are equally important in identifying the overall strengths and weaknesses of an application.
- Address your comments to the applicant, not to IMLS or to panel reviewers.
- Each comment should reflect the numeric score you provide for the corresponding section of the narrative.

#### Step-by-Step Instructions

##### 1. Verify Access to Applications

Use the link provided to you in an email message from your IMLS primary contact to access the applications assigned to you. Make sure you see all the applications referenced in the email, and then save them to your computer in a secure place that is not accessible to others. Call or email your IMLS primary contact immediately if any applications are missing or if you cannot open them.

**Confidentiality in IMLS Peer Review:** The information contained in grant applications is strictly confidential. Do not discuss or reveal names, institutions' project activities, or any other information contained in the applications.

##### 2. Verify Access to IMLS Online Reviewer System

Use the following link to verify that you have access to the IMLS Online Reviewer System:

<https://www.imls.gov/grants/become-reviewer/reviewer-resources/museum-reviewer-resources>

Then scroll to the bottom of the page to “Review Online,” and click on the link to access the Online Reviewer System Login.

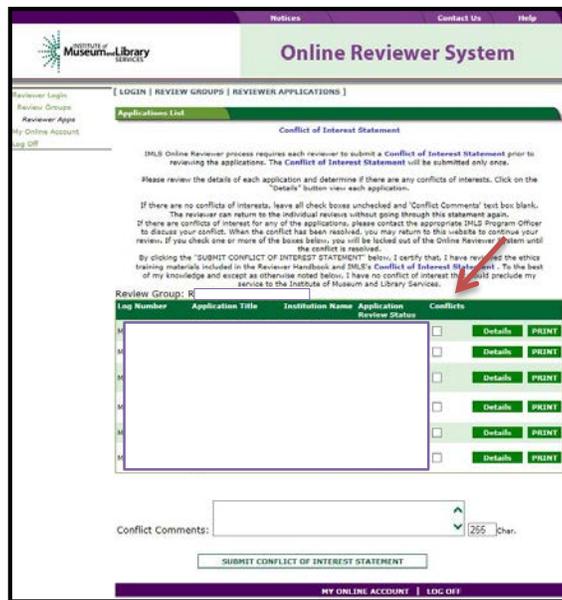
To login, enter the email address you have on file with IMLS, and use the default password: **password**. An **E-Review Security Screen** will appear. Read this page and click **OK**. Next, create a user account and establish your own password.

### 3. Assess Potential Conflicts of Interest

After you have created a new password, click **REVIEW GROUPS**, and your review assignment will appear. To access the list of applications assigned to you, click **VIEW**.

Read through your list of applications again to see if there are any potential conflicts of interest. Please see "[Complying with Ethical Obligations and Avoiding Conflicts of Interest.](#)"

CAUTION: Depending on your computer's operating system and/or the browser you use, you *may* see a screen with a column labeled "Conflicts" with a checkable box by each application. **Do not check any of these boxes** as doing so will disable access to the system and make it impossible for others in your review group to do their work. Instead, call or email your IMLS primary contact immediately if you have a conflict, or what may appear to be a conflict.



The screenshot shows the 'Online Reviewer System' interface. At the top, there are navigation links for 'Home', 'Contact Us', and 'Help'. Below the header, there are links for 'Reviewer Login', 'Review Groups', 'Reviewer Apps', 'My Online Account', and 'Log Off'. The main content area is titled 'Conflict of Interest Statement' and contains the following text:

IMLS Online Reviewer process requires each reviewer to submit a Conflict of Interest Statement prior to reviewing the applications. The Conflict of Interest Statement will be submitted only once.

Please review the details of each application and determine if there are any conflicts of interests. Click on the "Details" button view each application.

If there are no conflicts of interests, leave all check boxes unchecked and "Conflict Comments" text box blank. The reviewer can return to the individual reviews without going through this statement again.

If there are conflicts of interest for any of the applications, please contact the appropriate IMLS Program Officer to discuss your conflict. When the conflict has been resolved, you may return to this website to continue your review. If you check one or more of the boxes below, you will be locked out of the Online Reviewer System until the conflict is resolved.

By clicking the "SUBMIT CONFLICT OF INTEREST STATEMENT" below, I certify that, I have reviewed the ethics training materials included in the Reviewer Handbook and IMLS Conflict of Interest Statement. To the best of my knowledge and except as otherwise noted below, I have no conflict of interest that will preclude my service to the Institute of Museum and Library Services.

Review Group: R

Log Number	Application Title	Institution Name	Application Review Status	Conflicts
M				<input type="checkbox"/> Details PRINT
M				<input type="checkbox"/> Details PRINT
M				<input type="checkbox"/> Details PRINT
M				<input type="checkbox"/> Details PRINT
M				<input type="checkbox"/> Details PRINT
M				<input type="checkbox"/> Details PRINT

Conflict Comments:  255 Char.

At the bottom of the page, there are links for 'MY ONLINE ACCOUNT' and 'LOG OFF'.

If you have no conflicts of interest with any of the applicants on the list, click **SUBMIT CONFLICT OF INTEREST STATEMENT** at the bottom of page.

### 4. Read Applications

Revisit the STEMEx Notice of Funding Opportunities at <https://www.imls.gov/grants/available/stem-expert-facilitation-family-learning-libraries-and-museums-stemex> then read the applications, keeping in mind the review criteria for each section of the narrative. You will not need to reference each bullet point in your comments,

but these questions should guide your thinking about the strengths and weaknesses of each application. You can also access these [review criteria as a separate document](#) to keep handy as you read your applications.

### **New in 2016:**

On the Program Information Sheet (Section 4), applicants were required to select at least one pre-determined performance goal that reflects a measurable change or outcome they intend their project to achieve. For those projects in the Learning Experiences and Community Anchors categories, applicants were then required to select one or more specific performance measure statements associated with specific information that they will be required to collect during the grant period and report at the end of their projects. These pre-determined performance goals statements will help IMLS document the collective achievements of the projects we fund, and they may be found here: <https://www.imls.gov/performance-measure-statements-and-information-learning-and-community-projects>. For projects in Collections Stewardship category, applicants were asked to write their own performance measurement statements to reflect what success will look like upon the completion of their projects. Elements that you as a reviewer will evaluate in the Project Impact section of each application relate directly to performance goal(s) and performance measure statement(s).

## **5. Draft Comments**

You must write a constructive and substantive comment for each section of the narrative for each application you review. All three sections of the narrative have equal weight and are equally important in identifying the overall strengths and weaknesses of an application.

To organize notes for writing your comments, you may wish to use the “[STEMeX Review Notes Template](#).” Think about the review criteria for each section of the application narrative as listed above, and be sure to consider all the required components of the application as well as relevant Supporting Documents as resources for your assessment. Draft your comments using a word-processing program for later copying and pasting into the IMLS Online Reviewer System. Remember that each comment must be between 30 and 2000 characters long.

When drafting your comments ...

- use your professional knowledge and experience to assess the information objectively.
- judge the application on its own merits, and do not base your evaluation on any prior knowledge of an institution.
- if you question the accuracy of any information, call us—not the applicant—to discuss it.

Effective comments ...	Poor comments...
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• are presented in a constructive manner.</li> <li>• are concise, specific, and easy to read and understand.</li> <li>• reflect the resources of the institution.</li> <li>• are specific to the individual application.</li> <li>• reflect the numeric score assigned.</li> <li>• reflect the application’s strengths and identify areas for improvement.</li> <li>• are directed to applicants—not IMLS or panel reviewers—for their use.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• simply summarize or paraphrase the applicant’s own words.</li> <li>• make derogatory remarks.</li> <li>• penalize an applicant because you feel the institution does not need the money.</li> <li>• offer or ask for irrelevant or extraneous information.</li> <li>• make vague or overly general statements.</li> <li>• question an applicant’s honesty or integrity.</li> </ul>

***Make sure your comments justify the scores you provide. A highly complementary comment does not “remove the sting” of a low score, and a negative comment does not “even out” a high one. Comments and scores must complement each other and make sense as a whole.***

The chart below summarizes the most frequently asked questions from reviewers:

Should I consider ... ?	Yes	No
Whether a project meets the high priority need in the museum and library field	X	
An institution’s financial or staffing needs		X
Whether the project is well planned and the organization has the appropriate resources to complete the project	X	
Whether the applicant has included the information necessary for an adequate evaluation of its merits	X	
Whether a project is new or a resubmission		X
The size or age of the organization		X
An institution’s indirect cost rate		X

## 6. Assign Scores

Assign a preliminary score to each of the three sections of the application narrative: Statement of Need, Impact, and Project Design. Use a scale of 1 to 7, as described below. Use only whole numbers; do not use fractions, ranges, decimals, or zeroes.

SCORE DEFINITIONS	
<b>7 – Exceptional</b>	The applicant’s response is exceptionally strong with essentially no weaknesses in its support of the proposed project.
<b>6 – Excellent</b>	The applicant’s response is very strong with no more than one minor weakness in its support of the proposed project
<b>5 – Very Good</b>	The applicant’s response is strong with only a few minor weaknesses in its support for the proposed project.
<b>4 – Good</b>	The applicant’s response is adequate but with numerous minor weaknesses in its support for the proposed project.
<b>3 – Some Merit</b>	The applicant’s response may have some strengths but has at least one moderate weakness in its support for the proposed project.
<b>2 – Poor</b>	The applicant’s response is deficient and has at least one major weakness in its support of the proposed project.
<b>1 – Inadequate/Insufficient</b>	The applicant’s response is either inadequate or insufficient to evaluate fully and/or has numerous major weaknesses in its support of the proposed project.
<i>Minor</i>	<i>An easily addressable weakness that does not substantially lessen the impact of the project</i>
<i>Moderate</i>	<i>A weakness that lessens the impact of the project</i>
<i>Major</i>	<i>A weakness that severely limits the impact of the project</i>

## 7. Review Your Work

Review your draft comments and preliminary scores. A review with even one missing score or comment cannot be accepted by the IMLS Online Reviewer System. Adjust your scores, if necessary, to reflect more accurately your written evaluation. Scores should support comments, and comments should justify scores.

## 8. Enter Scores and Comments

Return to the IMLS Online Reviewer System at

<https://www.imls.gov/grants/become-reviewer/reviewer-resources/museum-reviewer-resources>

Then scroll to the bottom of the page to “Review Online,” and click on the link to access the Online Reviewer System Login.

Login with the email address you have on file with IMLS and the password you created in Step 2. Go to your list of assigned applications and click **REVIEW** beside any of them to begin.

Copy and paste your comments into the appropriate blue blocks for each section of the narrative for each application. Choose a numeric score between 1 and 7 from the **SCORE** dropdown menu. Be sure to save each comment by clicking **SAVE** at the bottom of the page before you move on to the next one. Use the controls on the side or top of the screen to navigate between sections.

Once you have completed assigning scores and providing comments for each application assigned to you, we recommend that you print a copy of each completed review to keep for your files. Then click on **I AM READY TO SUBMIT THIS REVIEW TO IMLS** to send all your work to IMLS.

At this point, you will not be able to re-enter the IMLS Online Reviewer System unless you notify your IMLS primary contact.

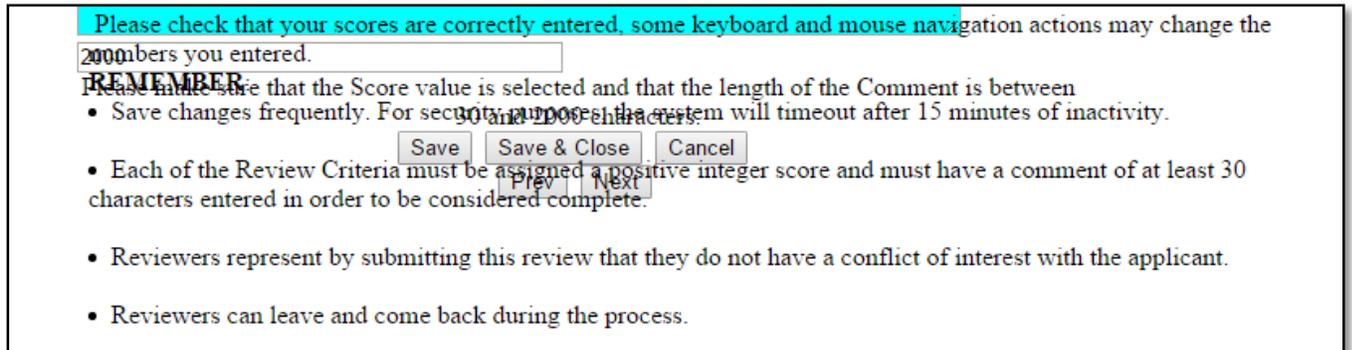
***For all questions about reviewing, either technical or programmatic, please call or email your IMLS primary contact directly.***

## 9. Manage Your Copies

Keep your applications and a copy of each review sheet until **September 30, 2016**, in case there are questions from IMLS staff. Continue to maintain confidentiality of all applications that you review by keeping electronic and paper copies in a secure place. After September 30, 2016, destroy the applications and the review sheets.

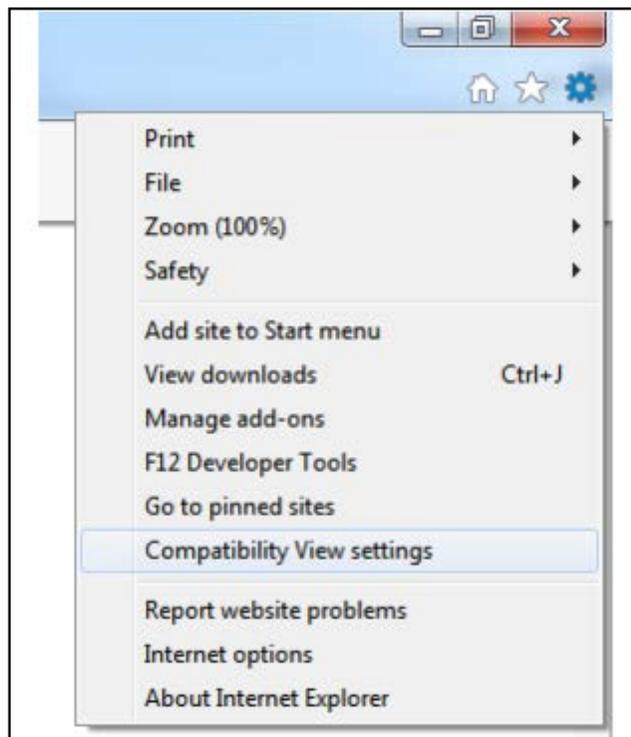
## Appendix: Online Reviewer System Troubleshooting

You may encounter an issue where the text displayed in the Online Reviewer System is superimposed on top of buttons or menus, making the buttons difficult or impossible to click. It may look like this:

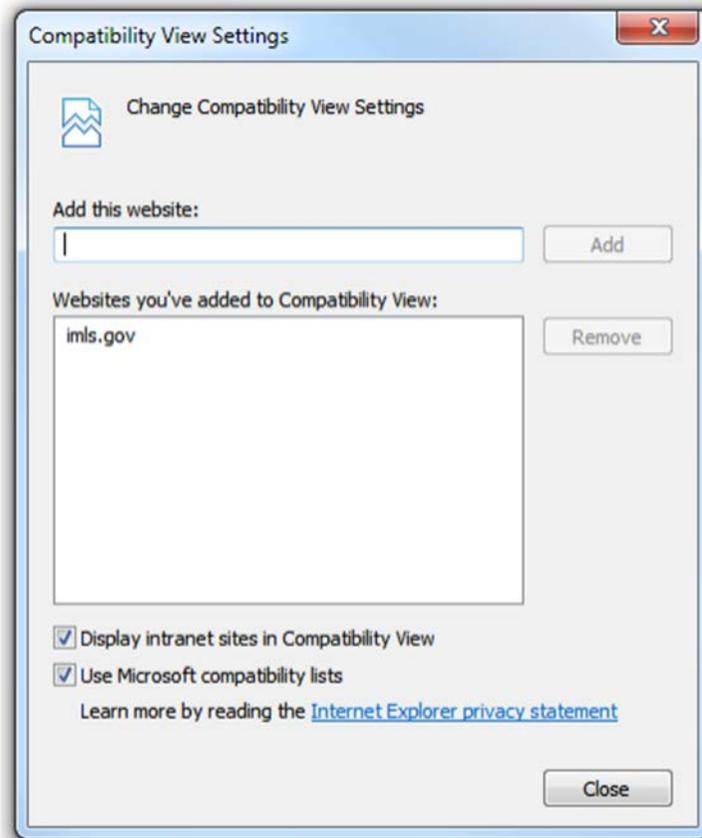


To resolve this issue, you must access the system using **Internet Explorer (IE) with Compatibility View (or Compatibility Mode) enabled**. In IE 11, this can be accomplished with the following steps:

1. Locate the Settings menu in the top right corner of the browser window and select Compatibility View settings.



2. Type “**imls.gov**” in the **Add this website:** dialogue box, then click **Add**.



If you are using another version of IE, please refer to the help documentation for your version, or contact IMLS for assistance.